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88th plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 May 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/72/713/Add.5)

The President: I would like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/72/713/Add.5, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that since the issuance of the document contained in A/72/713/Add.4, Yemen has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in documents A/72/713/Add.5?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/72/L.51)

Draft amendment (A/72/L.53)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.51.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of its 90 sponsors, draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment".

The unprecedented degradation of the environment is, we know, already causing hundreds of thousands of deaths owing to global warming, water and air pollution, and the degradation of biodiversity and soil. Those environmental impacts affect primarily the most vulnerable populations. If we do not act decisively, we know we will be exposed to tragic consequences: the depletion of natural resources, an exodus of people and renewed conflicts.

The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development established guidelines for the protection of the environment and various multilateral tools have been developed in several specific areas to address environmental challenges. Faced with the environmental emergency, the international community must take on new responsibilities and move forward. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement have shown that it is possible to take concrete and ambitious action on environmental issues. By developing a new tool to strengthen our commitments to the environment, we are rising to current and future challenges.

Draft resolution A/72/L.51, which we are introducing today, would contribute to that common effort. It would establish an open-ended working group to identify gaps in international environmental law and instruments and to assess the need for a new

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international instrument. The working group would also make recommendations to the General Assembly between now and mid-2019, with the possibility of convening an intergovernmental conference. Finally, the whole process would be supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, with the assistance of voluntary contributions.

The draft resolution that we are introducing today has been discussed at length. I would like to thank our many sponsors and all representatives for their commitment to this resolutely inclusive step that we are taking. The draft resolution is the result of a compromise and does not prejudge the future of the discussions in the open-ended working group or pre-empt decisions that would be taken by the General Assembly upon recommendations of the working group. It aims to generate discussions — discussions based on founding principles and solid bases — such as those established at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the sectoral conventions, in particular on climate, biodiversity, desertification, waste and chemical products. It is our common responsibility to raise our ambitions together to protect the planet and to obtain the appropriate tools to do so.

As I emphasized, the draft resolution is the balanced outcome of a very constructive negotiation. France has also made considerable efforts, as the Assembly knows, to reach an acceptable consensus, including by making significant compromises on the text and by taking everyone's desires and concerns fully into consideration. That is why we regret that a request to change that balance was proposed at the last minute. We therefore respectfully and amicably invite Kenya to take those compromise efforts into consideration and to withdraw its amendment. We also regret that a vote has been requested on our text. Let us hope that the best interests of the planet will prevail and that those who have called for that vote will amicably reverse their decision.

In conclusion, as I stated at the beginning of this meeting, we invite all delegations to support the procedural draft resolution "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". Once again, I warmly thank all delegations for their commitment, support and positive vote.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya to introduce draft amendment A/72/L.53.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to consider draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". I have taken the floor on behalf of the delegation of Kenya and the Kenyan Government to propose amendments to paragraph 5, as contained in document A/72/L.53.

In part (a), we propose deleting the word "preferably", and in part (b), we propose replacing the words "an initial substantive session" with the words "substantive sessions". In proposing those amendments, we wish to strongly reaffirm that Nairobi is the environmental capital of the United Nations, and that we strongly believe that all substantive sessions of the open-ended working group are at the core of the mandate and the functions of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and should be held in Nairobi in order to maintain the integrity of both UNEP and its secretariat.

Kenya supports the initiative to address environmental challenges in all their manifestations, and the proposed draft resolution is an important initiative to that end. That is why we have proposed amending paragraph 5 to make it acceptable and also to ensure that all those who support the strengthening of UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi have the opportunity to engage constructively.

Our proposal to have Nairobi as a venue for all substantive sessions is based on a number of resolutions and decisions of the United Nations. Those resolutions and decisions include but are not limited to the decision adopted by Heads of State and Government in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held from 20 to 22 June 2012, which is contained in the outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288). That decision was adopted to strengthen the headquarters functions of Nairobi and the United Nations Environment Programme in accordance with the following statement.

> "We are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda" (*resolution 66/288, annex, para.88*).

That decision allowed the full participation of all 193 States Members of the United Nations in the UNEP Governing Council from February 2013 as

part of the commitments of the world leaders at the Conference to improving the institutional framework for sustainable development.

In addition, all the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) have continued to reaffirm the integrity of UNEP and its secretariat, and therefore of the need to strengthen them, including by strengthening the host-country function of Kenya as the only United Nations headquarters in the global South. The most recent of those decisions was adopted in 2017 by the UNEA Council at its third meeting, as resolution UNEP/EA.3/L.28, which, in paragraph 1,

> "reiterates the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of the United Nations Environmental Programme and reaffirms its commitment to the effective consolidation of headquarters functions in Nairobi and the strengthening of UNEP's regional presence".

These important United Nations decisions and resolutions must therefore be respected. That is why the delegation of Kenya is inviting and urging all members of UNEP, which is all of us gathered here today, to show strong support for UNEP, UNEA and the secretariat by voting in favour of the amendments that the Kenyan delegation is proposing and thereafter supporting the draft resolution.

The amendments are aimed at guaranteeing a strong and vibrant UNEP. Any meeting that is held outside Nairobi therefore undermines the ability of UNEP and UNON to function and carry out the universal mandate that members of the General Assembly gave UNEP in this very Hall only six years ago. We therefore urge the Assembly to stand with UNEP and UNEA and their secretariat, and with Kenya. I ask members to vote for our proposed amendments and to stand with us. Kenya believes very strongly that the entire United Nations fraternity has the obligation to address environmental challenges, and that is best done by strengthening UNEP, UNEA and UNON.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/72/L.51 and draft amendment A/72/L.53. In connection with draft resolution A/72/L.51, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The following statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the United Nations Environmental Programme, I would like to present to the General Assembly an oral statement related to the voluntary contributions to cover the costs associated with draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". As the draft resolution mandates, its implementation will be based on voluntary contributions. As such, the ability to carry out the activities requested will depend on the timely provision of those contributions on a voluntary basis. Copies of the statement that I have just read will also be made available on the PaperSmart portal.

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Simonoff (United States of America): This explanation of vote pertains to draft resolution A/72/L.51 as a whole, not to the amendment just proposed.

The United States regrets that we have had to call for a vote on this draft resolution and that we will have to vote against it. There has so far been no transparent, open discussion among Member States about the need for or purpose of a new international environmental instrument. The United States opposes a draft resolution that in its title alone purports to prejudge movement "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment", when the concept itself remains ambiguous, and when Member States have not yet considered the merits of such a proposal or how it would contribute to the existing international environmental regime.

The United States engaged constructively in the negotiations on this draft resolution. In fact, in a spirit of compromise, we have been willing to support the establishment of an open-ended working group to examine whether there are gaps in the existing environmental system and, if so, possible options for addressing those gaps. However, the United States cannot support the title or any language in the draft resolution's paragraph 2 that would prejudge the working group's discussions or presume, before particular international environmental challenges have even been identified, that a new international instrument would be the most appropriate solution.

We also cannot accept the language in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft resolution indicating that environmental challenges should be addressed in a "comprehensive" manner. In fact, such language ignores the fact that many of the most successful environmental agreements, such as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, are narrowly tailored to address specific environmental problems. Our concerns on these points were not sufficiently addressed or taken into account.

One of our fundamental interests throughout this process has been to ensure that this proposal does not disrupt or distract from the continuing implementation of existing international environmental agreements, and we believe that many delegations share our concerns in that regard. As a result, going forward, we understand paragraph 9 as recognizing that nothing in this process or any outcome of it should affect the rights and obligations of parties under existing agreements. At the same time, given that some of the proponents of a global pact have suggested that it should include a re-examination of certain environmental principles, such as the Rio principles referenced in the fourth preambular paragraph, the United States cannot support language reaffirming those principles in this context.

The United States has therefore called for a vote on this draft resolution and will vote against it, and we urge other Member States to do so as well. The United States believes that consensus on the draft resolution could have been achieved if appropriate consideration had been given to Member States' legitimate concerns. We are unaware of any successful environmental negotiations that have been initiated by vote over the objections of Member States on a truncated schedule, and we regret that more time was not allocated to achieving agreement on a path forward or for Member States to engage in productive debate. We will now look ahead to a discussion with other Member States of the substantive merits of this proposal in the open-ended working group.

Mr. Kononuchenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation intends to vote against draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment", introduced by France.

We would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the process of putting together the draft resolution, which was not a constructive one. We and a number of other delegations repeatedly made principled suggestions about the texts, but they were persistently ignored. The coordinators expressed no desire to seek mutually acceptable wording for the text, and after the silence procedure refused to conduct further negotiations. We therefore still believe that achieving consensus on the draft resolution is possible.

The Russian Federation strongly supports environmental protection and sustainable development at the national, regional and global levels, including through the implementation of the relevant international instruments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Accord of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other documents that deal with specific issues. To date, there are more than 1,000 different instruments on the environment, which cover various topics and geographical areas. They have different legal statuses and are the outcome of a fragile compromise among Member States.

On the basis of the above, the global discussion on environmental issues should focus primarily on implementing the existing instruments and on supporting developing countries. The French initiative should be carefully and broadly considered before we can begin to discuss a global agreement. During the consultations on the draft resolution submitted, we thought it important to focus the efforts of the ad hoc open-ended working group on considering the possibility of improving implementation of the existing instruments on the environment rather than on establishing a new instrument.

We believe that the work of the open-ended working group should be carried out in an intergovernmental format, in particular since its outcome could be the conclusion of a new intergovernmental document. We are convinced that the draft resolution should not pre-empt the outcome of the discussion that takes place within the working group. We are ready to constructively participate in the discussion of further steps with regard to the French initiative.

Ms. Ponce (Philippines): The protection of the environment is one of the highest policy priorities of the Philippines — so much so that it is enshrined in our Constitution. The Constitution's Declaration of Principles and State Policies proclaims that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a

balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

It may be recalled that the integration of environmental concerns was accomplished primarily through the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio in 1992, where two major agreements were adopted — the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity — while another accord is still a work in progress, with the Forest Principles already adopted. It may be further recalled that an overarching agreement was also adopted in Agenda 21, which sets out the principles and the way forward for mainstreaming the environment into socioeconomic development planning and implementation. Going further back, there was the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, which placed human development, anchored in the environment, at the centre of the economic development of countries.

Therefore, there already exists an integrated framework for the global community's work on the environment and its sustainable development, which brings together the social, economic and environmental spheres to support human development in a sustainable manner. The current global framework on the environment, more specifically the critical environmental problems associated with climate change, biodiversity loss, the pollution of our seas and the proliferation of harmful chemicals and toxic wastes, is the elaboration of agreed solutions through a deductive approach, working out the operational details in a continuous, albeit protracted manner.

What remains to be done is to deliver the commitments, anchored on the Agenda 21 principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is recommended that any solution put forward be in that context, not in the formulation of another consolidated environment-centric agreement, which has the potential of renegotiating already agreed principles and solutions.

While we recognize the value of France's initiative to have a global framework to address the protection of the environment, it is important that the process be transparent and consultative and that it take into consideration the concerns of all Member States. It is essential that Member States be able to conduct extensive national inter-agency and stakeholder consultations and studies to determine if, in their view, the existing environmental law framework and instruments are sufficient or whether there is a need for a new intergovernmental process. That cannot be rushed and conducted over an abbreviated period.

It is also important that the solidarity of the Group of 77 be respected. It is unfortunate that France did not consult with the Chair of the Group of 77 to determine if it would negotiate as a group on the draft resolution prior to engaging bilaterally with its member States.

The decision to initiate a global intergovernmental process for a major issue, such as a global pact for the environment, must be taken on the basis of consensus, not by voting. A call for a vote reflects a lack of agreement among Member States and undermines the multilateral process, as well as the political importance and validity of the draft resolution (A/72/L.51) and the initiative.

For that reason, the Philippines will vote against the draft resolution.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a global pact for the environment".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/72/L.51: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belize, the Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Liberia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, San Marino, Sweden, Ukraine and Uruguay.

The President: In accordance with rule 90 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, the Assembly will first take a decision on the proposed draft amendment, issued as document A/72/L.53.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft amendment, contained in document A/72/L.53?

The amendment was adopted.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested on draft resolution A/72/L.51, as amended.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Philippines, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United States of America

Abstaining:

Belarus, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan

Draft resolution A/72/L.51, as amended, was adopted by 143 to 6, with 6 abstentions (resolution 72/277).

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain; the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote, I would remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

We would like to take this opportunity to voice our disappointment with one country's decision to submit amendments to paragraph 5 of resolution 72/277 at this stage of the process. The issue of the location of meetings of the open-ended working group was discussed at length over a negotiation process that lasted three months, with different countries or groups of countries presenting their not very divergent views. The formulation coined by the facilitators was aimed at bridging differences, while not prejudging but also not excluding the possibility of holding the working group's meetings in New York, Nairobi or elsewhere.

The European Union and its member States commend the facilitators' efforts in this regard. We are now looking forward to constructive discussions within the open-ended working group to advance this valuable initiative, a global pact for the environment, which seeks to address the challenges posed by environmental degradation caused, to a large extent, by human activity and which threatens our societies as well as international stability.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): On behalf of the people and the Government of Kenya, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to all the delegations that joined the consensus in support of our proposed amendments. As has been stated, this is the way that the business of the United Nations should be conducted. We are also delighted that the majority of delegations supported the adoption of resolution 72/277. It goes a long way towards demonstrating the seriousness with which this matter has been taken.

It also demonstrates the seriousness with which delegations address enumerated issues with which

the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi is engaged. We are honoured to see that having UNEP in Nairobi provide secretariat services is meaningful to the General Assembly. In fact, it is the only way the open-ended working group will operate with any effectiveness — by receiving special expertise on the environment and Secretariat services relating to the work that the working group proposes from the secretariat at UNEP in Nairobi, whose integrity, as I mentioned previously, must be maintained.

We further appreciate that this proposal from Kenya, as a host country, was also adopted. We therefore assure the entire United Nations family that my country will continue to play its positive and crucial role as a host to the only United Nations organ headquartered in global South. As a host country, we continue to implore all 193 States Members of the United Nations to establish their presence in Nairobi. We believe that this is a positive step towards ensuring full participation in all meetings of UNEP, as envisaged in 2012 when the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/213.

As we indicated in our earlier statement, Kenya takes seriously all environmental and climate-change challenges, and as a leading champion on environmental matters we have actually demonstrated this course by banning the use of plastic bags for the sake of securing the environment, and by putting in place other legal and institutional frameworks in order to ensure that we achieve sustainable environmental management and protection. Our position is anchored in the ever-expanding environmental and climate-change challenges in all parts of the global, be it in developed or developing countries.

I take this opportunity to thank the delegation of France for proposing the draft resolution and for the hard work that was done to ensure that all of us work towards a consensus on moving this process forward. I also want to thank the Group of 77 and China for embracing resolution 72/277 and negotiations on it as a unified group, and on behalf of UNEP, the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and Nairobi itself.

Mrs. Silva Maturana (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to say a few words in explanation of the vote that my delegation has just cast. This vote shows our respect for multilateralism and is cast with the best intentions of making progress on an issue that our country and our President have always considered to be of prime importance: trying to build respect at all times for the integrity of the vital systems and environmental functions of our planet.

The search for consensus solutions to the environmental problems whose structural cause is capitalism did not begin today, and it will continue to be part of our agenda for a long time to come. The resolution that we have adopted today (resolution 72/277) is just one more step on the long road that we have already been travelling on, and it should allow us to bring together efforts aimed at fighting against the degradation of our environment. A failure to adopt the resolution would have constituted a setback in the negotiations that are being carried out in other multilateral forums where our countries have decided to carry out this dialogue since 1992.

I would like to highlight my delegation's concern about involving other stakeholders in the resolution. Caring for and defending the integrity of our environment must involve all citizens of the world. However, accountability belongs to and actions must always be carried out by our Governments. Along this path and in order to avoid getting lost in minor discussions, it is important to remember the principles that have guided consensus, as well as scenarios we will continue to defend in this context as the Plurinational State of Bolivia and as a member of the Group of 77 and China.

First, a more just and democratic system can be created only together and in correspondence and solidarity with and for the benefit of our people.

Secondly, States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, to identify their own environmental policies and development priorities, and to seek a balance between human rights and a dignified and healthy life and the rights of Mother Earth.

Thirdly, any initiative aimed at addressing the environmental and climate crisis should be based on the principles already established in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as common but differentiated responsibilities, whereby the countries of the North have to shoulder their historic responsibilities for climate change, as well as the climate debt they owe to countries of the South.

Fourthly, a global pact for the environment will have meaning only if it includes the interests of all States. We must therefore redouble our efforts to achieve consensus. Obtrusive or hasty attitudes will not

inspire confidence in the process, nor does the position of certain countries that are withdrawing from and do not respect the agreements they have entered into with the international community and the planet itself. Those principles guide us in every sovereign decision that we make, and we will continue to defend them at every stage of the process, beginning with this resolution.

Mrs. Shurbaji (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like to express its position vis-à-vis the initiative to adopt a global pact for the environment, and vis-à-vis resolution 72/277, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment".

At the outset, the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the importance of fostering and activating international instruments and conventions on the environment and addressing the loopholes and problems that impede their implementation. However, we do not believe that one document will achieve that goal or that creating a global pact for the environment will provide the optimal solution to activate instruments and conventions that are different in scope and have different memberships and legal nature.

The concept of international environmental law is not yet agreed upon internationally, especially with regard to its legally non-binding nature. Member States abide by those environmental instruments in accordance with their circumstances and national priorities. Any attempt to address the current international environmental system therefore requires the General Assembly to adopt clear language that emphasizes national sovereignty over natural resources and that any proposed commitments should take into consideration current international instruments and national policies.

Finally, the establishment of an open-ended working group should take place in the light of a number of conditions, most important of which is the establishment of an intergovernmental working group, allowing other stakeholders to participate in it but ensuring that decision-making is reserved to the Governments of Member States. It is imperative to underscore that the main objective in establishing a working group must be to address the loopholes in international environmental law and instruments, including by submitting recommendations to the General Assembly with the aim of convening an international conference for the adoption of the global pact. This is inconsistent with the title of the resolution, which calls for a global pact for the environment as a final goal.

In conclusion, we must focus on achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. This should be done when we seek to study and identify loopholes in the current system and international instruments and conventions related to the environment. Achieving the goals and objectives of sustainable development to which we aspire is the basis for finding the appropriate means without giving up the principle of the shared and differentiated responsibilities of Member States in this regard. Therefore, and based on the above, my country's delegation voted against the resolution.

Mr. Xu Zhongsheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the international community in enhancing dialogue and cooperation and addressing environmental protection and other sustainable development issues through multilateral platforms.

China commends and expresses its appreciation for the French initiative, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". China is of the view that the development of environment-related international instruments concerns international environmental law and the fundamental interests of all States. The process should therefore be driven by Member States and based on extensive consultations so as to achieve the broadest possible consensus.

The General Assembly and its ad hoc open-ended working group should be guided by the principle of consensus and the intergovernmental nature of the working group must be maintained. When deepening international cooperation on environmental governance, the interests of all parties should be taken into consideration in a comprehensive manner.

First, the consideration of environmental issues should remain within the framework of sustainable development for the benefit of greater coordination and harmonization between environmental protection and economic and social development.

Secondly, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility should be upheld, and developing countries should be helped to steadily improve their environmental governance and sustainable development capabilities.

Thirdly, the principle of national sovereignty over environmental resources should be adhered to

as a prerequisite for international cooperation on the environment and a right bestowed upon States by the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of general international law.

Fourthly, developing countries must be fully involved and their concerns must be fully respected. In the pursuit of economic development and better livelihood, developing countries have a genuine need to enhance environmental protection and governance, and therefore should become indispensable participants in international environmental governance.

Mr. Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, our delegation supported a fully Member State-driven process and, as some speakers have mentioned, a process based on respect for the sovereign rights of countries and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Furthermore, we support the existing processes and we believe that there are enough existing processes. We are concerned that the new processes damage the current processes.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I just want to warmly thank the Member States for their constructive spirit and support, which enabled us to achieve today's excellent result of 143 votes in favour of resolution 72/277. We are particularly encouraged by the support of approximately 100 sponsors. We are pleased to follow up with discussions with all delegations in the open-ended working group in this same open and inclusive spirit. The Assembly can count on France's dedicated commitment to that end, in order to come together for environmental protection with a view to protecting the environment and our planet.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.